

Article - Education

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§24–502.

(a) The General Assembly makes the following declarations and findings:

(1) St. Mary's City is the birthplace and first capital of Maryland and occupies a unique place in American history which deserves honor and respect. St. Mary's City is the point of origin of many of the seminal and vital social, political, religious and humane precepts of our nation as later came to be reflected in the United States Constitution and Bill of Rights. St. Mary's City should be protected and developed as a memorial to Maryland's historical beginnings and her extraordinary contribution to the development of this nation.

(2) There is a great need to encourage the study and appreciation of the significance of St. Mary's City to the history of Maryland and the nation. The General Assembly recognizes that the organizational structures and funding for St. Mary's City have not been adequate to produce the knowledge of, or appreciation for, St. Mary's City that it is due from the citizens of this State as well as of the nation, and finds and declares that a new course of action is needed.

(3) The Historic St. Mary's City Commission needs the State to provide basic operational funding and organizational flexibility to successfully operate Historic St. Mary's City along with an increased emphasis on soliciting other public and private funds to provide support for educational initiatives, research, study, and curation, as well as accelerated archaeological projects and capital improvements.

(4) Every Maryland school child should be knowledgeable as to the history of St. Mary's City and its significance not only to this State but to the development of the nation. As resources become available, educational opportunities should be expanded to secondary and college age students as well as adults pursuing continuing educational opportunities.

(5) An affiliation between the Commission and St. Mary's College of Maryland will allow the Commission to put to fuller and more effective use the assets that the State has acquired, preserved and developed at Historic St. Mary's City over the last 30 years.

(6) The establishment of the Historic St. Mary's City Commission as an independent unit and provision of basic operating funds by the State is in the

public interest and will facilitate the management, operation, and development of this nationally important historic site.

(7) Historic St. Mary's City will benefit from a creative affiliation and more formal collaboration with its geographic neighbor, St. Mary's College of Maryland, itself designated in 1840 as a living monument to the legacy of Maryland's first colonial capital.

(8) Both the Commission and the College are committed to preserving the site of Maryland's first colonial capital and its archaeological treasures while continuing to assure that the general public and Maryland school children in particular have continued opportunities to visit and experience this important 17th century historical site.

(b) The General Assembly further states its legislative intent in the enactment of this subtitle to be as follows:

(1) To facilitate the efficient and effective operation of Historic St. Mary's City and the State's historical museum and archaeological park at Maryland's first capital, as well as enhance the capacity and authority of the Commission to preserve, protect, and appropriately use the historic and archaeological assets of Historic St. Mary's City;

(2) To equip the Historic St. Mary's City Commission with the necessary and vital managerial discretion to pursue its purpose effectively, with the understanding that the Commission will contract, as it considers useful and appropriate both fiscally and managerially, with St. Mary's College of Maryland, or other entities as may be practical and appropriate, for services such as procurement, personnel, and accounting, and otherwise collaborate formally and informally with St. Mary's College of Maryland, on the use and exchange of expertise and resources, both managerial and educational, as both entities may determine is prudent and effective, in advancing the basic mission of each institution;

(3) To grant the Commission authority over its plans, projects, and operations, subject to any State and federal laws with respect to the protection of historic and archaeological sites of significance to the State, including its status as a State historic property and national historic landmark;

(4) To facilitate the support of Historic St. Mary's City by other executive departments, including the Maryland Historical Trust in the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Museum Services Program located at Jefferson Patterson Park Museum, the Financial Assistance Programs and Office of Tourism in the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Education;

(5) To provide the Historic St. Mary's City Commission with the organizational structure and funding mechanisms necessary to more effectively functioning, and recognize the outdoor history museum and archaeological park located on the site of Maryland's first capital, as an educational facility for students and visitors of all ages; and

(6) To endorse the Commission's focus on developing the educational potential of Historic St. Mary's City, including a closer affiliation with St. Mary's College of Maryland, as the most effective way to assure that this unique site with its archaeological riches and importance to the history of Maryland and the nation is recognized and supported both privately and publicly as Maryland's most important historic site, with a view to attaining national recognition for St. Mary's City as a site of eminent national historical significance.

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